

Evacuation proved an emotional disturbance, and the strength of family feeling was illustrated by the children's comments. Home-sickness caused nervous and moral upsets. Fear of the children's ill-treatment, jealousy of the foster-parents, and the parents' own psychological need made them

recall their children. Evacuation failed through lack of information about children and foster-parents, and because institutes could not replace the home. Future civilization depends on healthy family relationships.

D. ROBERTSON-RITCHIE.

CORRESPONDENCE

Estimates of Future Population

To the Editor, Eugenics Review

SIR,—I believe that it is intended that new estimates of the future population of England and Wales shall be made by the Population Investigation Committee. Certainly the estimates of future birth rates and population totals, for England and Wales, given in *The Future of our Population*, turned out to be very erroneous. Taking the figures from the second edition of this pamphlet, 1938, page 17, the probable average crude birth rate for the 5 years 1935-39 was given as 12.41; actually it was 15.1. Similarly, the probable average crude birth rate for the 5 years 1940-44 was given as 10.72; actually for the 3 years 1940-42 it was 14.9. The average error for the 8 years was 3.2. It is not possible to attribute these large differences between predicted and actual values to the effect of the war, because the discrepancies began in 1935.

The moral is, perhaps, obvious. We should be careful not to attach any great importance to predictions of future birth rates. General views of tendencies may properly be held; and there are certain statistical predictions, based on life-table expectations, which afford a reasonably sure ground for calculations, such as the number of survivors, in any given year, of the females born within a certain space of time. But the prediction, years in advance, of birth rates, is liable, as we have seen, to be misleading.

C. F. ARDEN-CLOSE.

Mayfield, 22 Christchurch Road,
Winchester.

"Birth, Poverty and Wealth"

To the Editor, Eugenics Review

SIR,—We are all of us indebted to Mr. Titmuss for his valuable analysis of the variations in infantile mortality in his five economic classes. I do not think that his conclusions with regard to the

cause, a purely economic reason, will meet with quite the same acceptance. Firstly, an omnibus class "unskilled labour" is most unsatisfactory. Galton divided it into unskilled labour in constant employment and unskilled labour in casual employment and made it the dividing line in the community. The former comprise a most valuable section of the community; the latter comprise a most miscellaneous group, including members of the so-called "Social Problem Group." As intelligence is an important factor in this question, one certainly would expect to find more progress in the higher classes, especially in a transitional period when there is new knowledge to be assimilated.

And this brings me on to my second point. He is, through no fault of his own, rather in the position of a man describing a mile race in the middle of the third lap, when there is still a lap and a half to run. The infantile mortality rate only begun to fall in 1900; he gives us the position in 1911, 1921, and 1931. But since then we have had another enormous drop. We have lately been given a figure of 48—a fall of 20 per cent on the 1931 figure. Until this figure is analysed we cannot tell whether his phenomenon is not purely transitional.

But, thirdly, there is a genetic point on which he just touches in his Appendix C. There is a considerable correlation between the birth rate and infantile mortality figures. Those countries with a low birth rate have a low infantile mortality rate and vice versa. Which are the countries with the low birth rates? Those where the families are small. Now, as long ago as 1911, Dr. R. J. Ewart in the REVIEW pointed out that second children in a family had the lowest infantile mortality rate and that this rate rose steadily until the eleventh child and upward had a rate three times that of the second child. No doubt the figures have changed since then, but not the trend. Apply this to the five economic classes. The size of the family is certainly greater in the Vth and the Ist—so here is a factor tending to produce the phenomenon